

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - October 25, 2006.

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced the unsealing today of a 26-count indictment charging Javier Sanchez-Perfino and Alberto Noriega-Perez with Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain; Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens; Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain; Transportation of Illegal Aliens and Harboring Illegal Aliens. A federal grand jury sitting in San Diego handed up the indictment on October 18, 2006, which was then sealed until today's arrest.

The indictment charges that Javier Sanchez-Perfino controls the smuggling routes through the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Bombing Range near Yuma, Arizona, to facilitate the smuggling of illegal aliens from Imperial County to Los Angeles for the Perfino Alien Smuggling Organization ("Perfino ASO"). The indictment identifies the Perfino ASO as a criminal organization conducting alien smuggling activities in the El Centro Border Patrol Sector, which spans Imperial County.

The indictment further alleges that Alberto Noriega-Perez owns two properties in Holtville, California and rents them to the Perfino ASO for the purpose of gathering and harboring illegal aliens for transportation to Los Angeles. The indictment also includes forfeiture allegations for the two properties.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Stacey H. Sullivan, who is prosecuting the case, Sanchez-Perfino was arrested on Monday, October 23, 2006 and arraigned earlier today before United States Magistrate Judge Cathy Ann Bencivengo in federal court in San Diego. Sanchez-Perfino's next court appearance is scheduled for October 27, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. before Magistrate Judge Bencivengo. Noriega-Perez was arrested today and has not yet been arraigned.

United States Attorney Lam said, "We will not hesitate to dismantle alien smuggling organizations, forfeit their assets, and imprison their leaders."

The arrests and indictment are the culmination of a three-year joint investigation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the United States Border Patrol of the Perfino Smuggling Organization.

"Smugglers are motivated only by greed and profits. They don't respect human life, they endanger the lives of those they smuggle and they have no regard or concern for our national security," said Michael Unzueta, Special Agent in Charge for ICE Investigations in San Diego.

Chief Carl McClafferty of the El Centro Sector Border Patrol stated, "This investigation is an outstanding example of a multi-agency effort to secure our nation's borders and dismantle alien smuggling organizations that pose a serious threat to homeland security. Through a joint effort by the U.S. Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Office of the Inspector General, we were able to arrest Javier Sanchez Porfino, the suspected head of one Imperial Valley's most notorious smuggling organizations. The dismantling of the Porfino Alien Smuggling Organization is a significant milestone in securing our borders by inhibiting the ability of alien smuggling organizations to operate in the Imperial Valley. The Border Patrol along with other partner agencies are targeting and will continue to target smuggling organizations that operate within the Imperial Valley."

DEFENDANTS

Case Number: 06cr2268-JM

Javier Sanchez-Perfino (aka “El Perro”)

Alberto Noriega-Perez

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Counts: 26

Title 18, United States Code, Section 371; Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324 (a) (2) (B) (ii) (Conspiracy To Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain);

Title 8, United States Code, Sections 1324 (a) (1) (A) (iii) and (v) (I) (Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens;

Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324 (a) (2) (B) (ii) (Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain)

Title 8, United States Code, Section 2 (Aiding and Abetting);

Title 8, United States Code, Sections 1324 (a) (1) (A) (iii) and (v) (II) (Transportation of Illegal Aliens and Aiding and Abetting);

Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324 (a) (1) (A) (iii) and (v) (II) (Harboring Illegal Aliens and Aiding and Abetting; and

Title 18, United States Code, Section 982 (a) (6) (Criminal Forfeiture).

Maximum Penalty: Twenty years’ incarceration
 \$250,000 fine
 Three years of supervised release

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

United States Border Patrol

An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.